

# St Mary's Children's Village

1972 – 1980s

## Details

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St Mary's Children's Village was the new name for St Mary's Hostel in Alice Springs from 1972 when it came under the management of the Anglican organisation, St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service. The Village included three cottages – Pink Cottage, Grey Cottage and Blue Cottage. Each cottage accommodated up to six Aboriginal children supervised by cottage parent. The Village operated into the 1980s.

The St Mary's Children's Village was the new name for St Mary's Hostel in Alice Springs from 1972 when St Mary's came under the management of a new body, St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service. As early as 1957, discussions began about the phasing out of the dormitory system at the Hostel and replacing it with cottage style care.

It was not until ten years later that alterations to the institution began in earnest after a different vision for the institution was mapped out by a new superintendent, The Reverend P.D. Alexander-Smith.

Church reports from 1968 and 1969 reveal that St Mary's Hostel had already started to become a village. It comprised a 'transit block' for children arriving at the Village and four cottage homes, located around a central Church. The village was set in a 480 acre property on the outskirts of Alice Springs and in total provided accommodation for 49 children aged between 3 and 17. Each cottage had a dining room, lounge, kitchen, laundry and bathroom. Two children shared each bedroom. The children in the cottages were supervised by a total staff of 12 adults.

A report from St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service supplied to the government in August 1973 provides the names and information about the residents of each of the cottages in the Village, referred to as Pink Cottage, Grey Cottage and Blue Cottage. In 1973, these cottages accommodated up to six children, a number of whom were wards of the state.

The report also describes the first two separate St Mary's cottages in the township of Alice Springs, Leslie Cottage and Heath Cottage. A further cottage, Matthews was also built in Alice Springs. Each of the cottages was run by a house parent or parents and provided family style care for up to eight children, often including siblings from the same family. In the mid to late 1970s the cottages began to provide emergency accommodation for State children and residential care for children with disabilities.

St Mary's Children's Village continued to operate into the 1980s.

## More info

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### Chronology

- Mount Blatherskite Hostel (1946 - 1947)
  - St Mary's Hostel (1947 - 1972)

- **St Mary's Children's Village (1972 – 1980s)**

## Related Entries

### Run by

- [St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service \(1972 - 1980s\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [Leslie Cottage, St Mary's \(1973 - 1980s\)](#)  
Leslie Cottage was one of three town-based cottages run by St Mary's in addition to the three cottages in the Village.
- [Heath Cottage, St Mary's \(1971 - 1980s\)](#)  
Heath Cottage was one of three town-based cottages run by St Mary's in addition to the three cottages in the Village.
- [Matthews Cottage, St Mary's \(1973? - 1980s\)](#)  
Matthews Cottage was one of three town-based cottages run by St Mary's in addition to the three cottages in the Village.

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Welfare Branch - St Mary's Hostel - Policy and development \(1956 - 1958\)](#)
  - [Correspondence files relating to social development with "SD" prefix, Northern Territory Social Development Branch and successors \(1974 - 1980\)](#)
  - [General Administration Files, Annual Single Number with "N" prefix \(1982 - 1984\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/st-marys-childrens-village/>